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SUBJECT: GHANA'S 2006 TRAFFICKING-IN-PERSONS REPORT

REF: A. STATE 3836
[1B](#). ACCRA 00386
[1C](#). STATE 25229

SUMMARY

[11](#). (SBU) As requested ref A, post submits this cable as input for the sixth annual Trafficking in Persons Report. Ghana has problems with both domestic and international human trafficking. The GoG, international and local NGOs have combined efforts to focus on combating domestic trafficking in children, the cultural complacency that allows such trafficking, and related hazardous child labor. Ghana passed anti-trafficking legislation in December 2005. No traffickers have yet been prosecuted, although there was one TIP-related arrest since passage of the law. Efforts to combat international trafficking have been hampered by the lack of human and material resources common to most developing nations. End Summary.

[12](#). (SBU) The following responses are keyed to ref A.

Para 21: Overview

[1A](#). (U) Ghana is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children trafficked for the purpose of forced domestic and commercial labor and sexual exploitation. Internal trafficking is more common than cross-border trafficking. The Government does not have official figures on the number of trafficked persons, either domestic or cross-border, and estimates are difficult to come by and of limited reliability. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that the number of trafficked children working in fishing villages along the Volta Lake is well into the thousands. (Note: Even IOM, which manages one of the most successful and organized anti-trafficking programs in the country, has difficulty collecting this kind of data. End note.) Women and girls are more vulnerable to cross-border trafficking, particularly for the purposes of sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Boys and girls are equally vulnerable to trafficking for the purposes of labor in the fishing villages and as 'kayaye' (porters) and street hawking. Kayaye are among the most vulnerable trafficking victims as many are forced into prostitution after dark.

[1B](#). (U) Domestically, most trafficking is in children. The GoG has identified a number of key child trafficking zones that are considered source areas, which are primarily in the Central, Western, Greater Accra and Volta Regions, and to a lesser extent in the Northern Region. Key destination areas are found along the fishing villages in the Brong Ahafo, Eastern, and Volta Regions, as well as the cocoa producing areas in Central and Western Regions. Children are often trafficked from the north to the more populated and commercial centers in the south to work as domestic servants, street sellers, and porters.

Internationally, the majority of trafficking victims are children shipped to and from the neighboring countries of Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, and Nigeria to work as laborers or household help. There are also many young trafficked women who are shipped to Western Europe, mainly to work as prostitutes. Some Nigerian women transit through Ghana on their way to Western Europe to work in the sex industry, and there is reportedly some trafficking in persons from Burkina Faso, going through Ghana on their way to Cote d'Ivoire.

GoG officials confirm reports of child trafficking to 'Ghana Town', a community of Ghanaian fishermen in the Gambia, to work for Ghanaian masters there. Children have also been trafficked to Nigeria after their Ghanaian guardians were told they were going to work in Togo. (Note: There is a common ethnic group in the border areas between Togo and Ghana, and there is greater cultural acceptance in sending one's child to work for 'relatives' in Togo than in sending them to work in Nigeria. End note.)

Ghana's anti-trafficking efforts are hampered by a lack of trained personnel and resources, as well as a cultural acceptance of some forms of trafficking. Children from rural communities are commonly sent by their parents to work as domestic servants for distant relatives in cities. Given the severe poverty that many rural families face, Ghanaians generally accept and even encourage sending a child to work for well-off relations in the city, with the hope

that the child will receive some vocational training or education. The GOG recognizes as a problem more exploitative forms of trafficking, such as instances of cross-border trafficking or recruiting of children by professional human traffickers. Law enforcement authorities, however, are not equipped with adequate training or financial resources to deal with the problem. Many Ghanaian law enforcement agencies lack access to very basic resources that would improve anti-trafficking efforts, such as computer equipment to facilitate case management and data collection, adequate lines of telecommunication both within the country and across borders, adequate physical office space and manpower, and transportation for investigations.

Despite these obstacles, the GOG took a major step forward in fulfilling its commitment to combat trafficking by enacting the Human Trafficking Act in December 2005. The law established a Human Trafficking Fund (HTF) aimed at supporting the rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficking victims.

1C. (U) The GOG has significant political will to combat trafficking in persons, as was reflected in the passage of the TIP bill this year. The Ministries of Women and Children and Manpower, Youth and Employment are committed, including at the top levels. However, the major obstacle to addressing the TIP problem is a lack of resources.

Donors are assisting in anti-TIP activities. As of February 2006, UNICEF had committed to significantly contributing to the HTF established by the law. The fund will draw from donor organizations, fines on convicted traffickers and other sources. The GOG is actively soliciting more funds for the HTF.

Since July 2005, the Ghana Police Service (GPS) put more than 200 senior officers, cadets and recruits through Trafficking in Persons training provided by the USG through the Department of Justice's ICITAP program. Participants learned how to recognize trafficking victims and secure evidence against trafficking criminals. TIP training is now a standard module in the curriculum of the Police Training Academy in Tesano, Accra.

1D. (SBU) The government does not systematically monitor its anti-trafficking efforts. However, foreign contributions have improved data collection and case management at some agencies. The data and assessment measures that do exist, as well as annual reports that capture budget expenditures on trafficking and related programs, are readily available when requested by Emboffs and are often released to the press.

Most surveys on child trafficking are conducted in connection with specific, localized projects that are jointly carried out by NGOs, international organizations and the GoG. Such surveys tend to be qualitative, not quantitative, in nature and involve interviews with parents, children, traditional rulers, and local government officials. There has been no survey (and there is no capacity for such a survey) that would provide accurate nationwide statistics on trafficking in Ghana.

In 2004, the Department of Social Welfare and ILO/IPEC conducted a qualitative survey in the Northern Region and the Upper East to assess the scope of trafficking in those regions. This was the first trafficking field survey in these regions to date. According to the report released in January 2005, trafficking is a major problem in the Northern region. Internal traffickers who exploit the impoverished conditions of the north (a result of prolonged dry seasons and lack of employment opportunities) account for the majority of human trafficking in this region. Children are largely trafficked to the southern regions. The ILO has acted on some of the report's recommendations, including providing funding for the Department of Social Welfare to conduct sensitization in some Northern Region communities.

Para 21: Prevention

1A. (U) The GOG openly acknowledges that human trafficking is a problem. In October 2001, the GOG adopted the ECOWAS Plan of Action, which mandated that states establish an operational National Task Force on Trafficking by June 2002 and begin national awareness campaigns. In early 2002, the Vice President formally launched Ghana's National Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, three months ahead of the ECOWAS deadline at an ILO-sponsored conference on child trafficking in Ghana. The National Task Force is no longer necessary as Ghana has now passed anti-human trafficking legislation. Its coordinating role among agencies that combat TIP will be taken over by a 17-member Human Trafficking Board established under the new law.

In June 2004, MOWAC and the District Chief Executive (DCE) of a community in the Eastern Region announced it had identified a child trafficking zone in that area. The DCE said that it would work with MOWAC to collect data on children who had been trafficked from that area and help reintegrate them into the community.

1B. (U) The key ministries engaged with trafficking issues are the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC), the Ministry for Manpower, Youth, and Employment (MMYE, formerly Manpower, Development, and Employment; the Department of Social Welfare is

part of this ministry), the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice.

Other ministries involved in program implementation at the community level include the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry for Local Government and Rural Development.

The Ministry of Justice took the lead on developing the new law against trafficking. The MMYE has responsibilities under the law on the program level to combatting child labor as well as child trafficking. MOWAC has responsibility as the lead Ministry in implementing the law, establishing the Fund and the Management Board.

1C. (U) There have been many government-run anti-trafficking public campaigns. From February 23-24, 2006, MOWAC held a two-day roundtable meeting for all NGOs and donor agencies involved in trafficking in persons to improve coordination.

The Department of Social Welfare actively conducts sensitization campaigns that target the sending villages, especially in the Central Region. This involves reaching out to parents, schools, and community leaders to educate them about the issue of trafficking. At a workshop in April 2004, the head of the Ghana Child Labor Unit noted that part of its "Operation Bring Your Children Home" campaign included direct outreach in selected schools. In 2006 MOWAC plans a nationwide campaign to educate the general public on the provisions of the new TIP legislation, for which it seeks USG assistance.

The Ghana Education Service stepped up its efforts to protect the rights and welfare of children. The GoG strongly supported the U.N's Education for All goals. The Ghana Education Service (GES) actively campaigned in 2004 for expanded education of girls by providing scholarships at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS) levels and by providing incentives for female teachers to teach in rural areas. The GES also placed Girls Education Officers at the regional and district levels. These efforts have been accompanied by increased government support of 'informal' schools, which target children who go to school but also work to help support their families.

1D. (U) Due to a scarcity of resources, the GoG supports prevention programs in a very limited capacity. For example, the host government contribution (usually in the form of human resources) to many ongoing ILO/IPEC programs is approximately 10%, depending on the specific project (e.g., some projects have a slightly higher GoG contribution, some have a slightly lower contribution). In 2004 and 2005, the MMYE included a line item in its annual budget request for anti-trafficking programs.

(Note: there was no item E in the tasker. End note.)

1F. (U) The Government's relationship with NGOs, international organizations, and civil society is constructive. Embassies, NGOs and civil society contacts have been unanimous in their view that the new ministers at MOWAC and MMYE, who were appointed in February 2005, are cooperative on TIP issues.

1G. (U) The Director of the Ghana Immigration is committed to combating human trafficking and has trained officers to identify victims. In February 2006, GIS announced its plans for a new border control unit. This should improve monitoring of trafficking. As of 2003, the GIS began using the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) at Accra's international airport to collect and screen for information on international travelers. As of February 2006, the use of PISCES was expanded to the Aflao and Elubo borders with Togo and Cote d'Ivoire respectively. In 2004, the Department of Social Welfare increased its communication with airport officials to be watchful for potential trafficking through the airport. The Department is concerned about fraudulent adoption cases and potential criminal motives behind these cases.

1H. (U) There is no formal mechanism in place that coordinates communication between NGOs. See 22 J.

(Note: there was no item I in the tasker. End note.)

1J. (U) Prior to the passage of the anti-trafficking bill, the GOG had a National Plan to Combat Trafficking as well as a National Task Force made up of the Ministries of Justice, Manpower Youth and Employment, and Women and Children's Affairs, the National Police, Ghana Immigration, and members of civil society. The Task Force expired with the passage of the law in December 2005.

The Human Trafficking Act provides for the establishment of a Human Trafficking Management Board. The Board is expected to make recommendations for a national plan of action against trafficking in persons and to monitor and report on the plan. At the time of reporting, MOWAC was in the process of forming the Board.

123. Investigation and Prosecution of Traffickers

1A. (U) The Human Trafficking Act was signed by the President in December 2005. The law defines trafficking as ".the recruitment,

transportation, transfer, harboring, trading or receipt of persons within and across national borders..." Trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced labor or sexual exploitation is well covered under one of the provisions of the law which states that "Exploitation shall include at the minimum, induced prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs." The law covers both internal and external trafficking. There is a special provision in the law that seeks to protect child victims of trafficking. According to Act (1) (4), when a child is trafficked, "the consent of the child, parents or guardian cannot be used as a defense in prosecution.." This clause is particularly important given Ghana's cultural practice of parents sending a child away to live with distant relatives or with somebody who promises to find a job for the child. Under the law, the minimum penalty for convicted traffickers is five year imprisonment (there is no stated maximum prison term.)

¶B. (U) The Human Trafficking Act does not have different penalties for traffickers of people for labor or sexual exploitation. All convicted traffickers may be sentenced to no less than five years in prison.

¶C. (U) In June 1998, parliament passed comprehensive legislation to protect women and children's rights. The bill doubled the mandatory sentence for rape, making it punishable by 7 to 25 years in prison. It also banned the practice of ritual servitude, criminalized indecent assault and forced marriage, and raised the punishments for defilement, incest, and prostitution involving children.

¶D. (U) If caught, prostitutes or perpetrators of related activities (such as owning/operating a brothel, pimping or being a client of a prostitute) are charged with a misdemeanor which entails payment of a fine with no jail time. Prostitution laws are rarely enforced due to lack of proof when booking a possible suspect. Lack of human and financial resources within the police department compound the problem. There was no data recorded or made available by the police's Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVISU) on prostitution in 2005.

¶E. (U) To date, the GOG has prosecuted no traffickers under the new human trafficking law.

¶F. (U) Traffickers tend to work as freelance operators rather than as organized groups. The GOG, NGOs and international communities involved in all aspects of trafficking agree that there is no nationally or internationally coordinated effort to engage in trafficking in Ghana. Within Ghana, brokers or recruiters procure children from rural areas and move them to the locations where they will work. One of the main destinations for trafficked children is fishing village in the Brong Ahafo region. Recruiters may move as many as ten children at one time. There are no reports available about where profits from trafficking are being channeled. It is generally presumed that domestic traffickers keep all profits.

¶G. (SBU) The GoG actively investigates cases of trafficking. There are two high-profile cases that highlight the efforts by Interpol and GoG agencies to identify children who had been trafficked to other countries. In April 2004, through the coordinated efforts of the GoG and the Government of The Gambia, twelve Ghanaian girls were identified and brought home. According to Interpol, a local Ghanaian informant tipped off UNICEF, which in turn contacted Interpol-Ghana about the case. Interpol-Ghana contacted Interpol-Gambia to verify the accuracy of the report. Upon verification of the report, the Department of Social Welfare worked with Gambian officials to repatriate the twelve girls.

In a second case in November 2004, Interpol and the Department of Social Welfare received information from a local informant about six girls who had been trafficked to Nigeria. After verifying the case details, the Ghanaian embassy in Nigeria assisted in bringing the girls to the Ghana-Togo border in late December 2004. An Interpol official brought the girls from the border to Accra, at which point the Department of Social Welfare became responsible for rehabilitating and reintegrating them. (Note: According to GoG authorities involved in this case, the Nigerian authorities were uncooperative in helping to repatriate the girls. The Nigerian woman accused of trafficking is currently in Nigerian custody and no information has been shared with the GoG about her case status. End note.)

Interpol has not heard from the informant in the Nigerian case since he initially approached them. GOG authorities involved in this case note that the Nigerian authorities were initially uncooperative in helping to repatriate the girls. However, Nigerians currently share information on the status of the case and Ghanaian Interpol officials are expected to travel to Nigeria with two of the victims who will testify against the trafficker.

Local law enforcement does not use any special techniques in the investigation of trafficking. There are several cases that involved detection of trafficking by law enforcement authorities through tip-offs by local residents, and arrests have been made. Interpol Ghana relies on its computer-based program (i24/7) to track details of criminals and traffickers with its counterparts across the world.

¶H. (U) In 2005, the Ghana Police Service participated in ICITAP-funded basic police training, which included training on TIP. The

Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) attempts to identify traffickers and trafficked persons through the detection of fraudulent documentation. The GIS has received training from the USG and other foreign countries on fraud in the past, which has been well-received. Many government officials and law enforcement agencies have attended training sponsored by local and international NGOs in the past year.

II. (U) In September 2005, UNICEF and MOWAC facilitated a meeting of 30 professionals in social work, law enforcement, the judiciary and ILO from Ghana and the Gambia to deliberate and negotiate a draft protocol that is to provide a bilateral legal framework for monitoring and eliminating child trafficking between the two countries. The directors of Social Welfare in both countries made graphic presentations on the evidence of child trafficking between Ghana and the Gambia. See para 23. G for other instances of cross-border cooperation.

IJ. (SBU) There have been no extraditions of persons charged with trafficking in other countries. The new TIP law has a provision for extraditing a non-citizen but does not address the extradition of Ghanaian nationals.

A GoG official was implicated in a child trafficking case in early 2004. The daughter of a Member of Parliament (MP) was sentenced in the U.S. for bringing a Ghanaian woman into the U.S. and forcing her to work as a domestic servant. The MP allegedly helped facilitate the woman's entry to the U.S. under false pretenses. The U.S. requested the extradition of the MP in 2003 and again in 2005, and has repeatedly raised the request with GOG officials. The MP was re-elected in December 2004. The GOG has not yet initiated action on this extradition case.

IK. (U) There is no evidence of government involvement in or tolerance of trafficking, on a local or institutional level.

IL. As detailed para J, an MP has been indicted in the U.S. on trafficking-related charges.

IM. (U) Ghana does not have an identified problem with child sex tourism.

IN. (U) Ghana's status on the ILO conventions and UN protocols are as follows:

ILO Convention 182 - Ratified, 6/13/00

ILO Convention 29 - Ratified, 5/20/57

ILO Convention 105 - Ratified, 12/15/58

UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography - Signed but not ratified, 9/24/03

UN Option Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially against Women and Children - Not signed.

Para 24: Protection and Assistance to Victims

IA. (U) The GoG provides limited resources to assist victims of trafficking. In many cases, the authorities try to reunite trafficked and abused children with their families. NGOs have sought to provide services the police and social services cannot by establishing a few crisis centers. However, as awareness of the problem grows and trafficking victims seek assistance, the limited GOG assistance is becoming more strapped. In February, 2006 MOWAC and Department of Social Welfare signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IOM to establish a new center for rehabilitating trafficked children in Madina, Greater Accra Region. According to the Department of Social Welfare, the two children's homes it runs in Accra are stretched beyond capacity. The head of the trafficking unit at Interpol notes that these two facilities, which are used as temporary shelters for children who have been rescued before they are repatriated, are more suitable for younger children than for some of the older children who have been brought back. She underscored the need for appropriate space for children and 'victim-friendly' accommodation.

IB. (U) The GOG does not have the financial resources to provide funding to foreign or domestic NGOs. It seeks donor funding for TIP-related projects. However, where it can, the government provides personnel and moral support to NGOs. For instance, the rehabilitation center in Madina was completely refurbished by the GOG.

IC. (U) There is no such screening/referral process in place.

ID. (U) Victims of trafficking found at the borders are deported to their country. However, since Ghana's problem with trafficking is mainly internal, and there is virtually no data available on how many victims are trafficked externally, it is difficult to factually report on victim rights.

E. (U) The GoG does not have an adequate system in place for victim interviewing to assist with the investigation and prosecution of trafficking. Efforts to work with victims for information-gathering and investigative purposes are hampered by a lack of a formal communication system between agencies with different roles in the prevention, prosecution, and protection stages.

F. (U) The GoG does not provide specific protection for victims of trafficking beyond those available to all crime victims or witnesses. The new law, however, enjoins the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to provide temporary basic material support for the care, protection, counseling and reintegration of a rescued victim of trafficking. The law also mandates the Fund to resource District Assemblies to protect the welfare of a trafficked person within its area of authority. As a general note (for all detainees), prisons in Ghana are very overcrowded and suspects are often detained for prolonged periods of time as a result of an overloaded judiciary.

G. (U) The GoG does not provide specialized training for government officials in recognizing trafficking and in the provision of assistance to trafficked victims. However, it has taken part in trainings conducted by the ILO. The GoG does work with its embassies and consulates in other countries on trafficking issues, although on a limited, case-related basis.

H. (U) Through the Department of Social Welfare, the government provides some counseling and shelter to victims of trafficking. It also provides some start-up assistance when trafficked children are repatriated to their home communities.

I. (U) Several NGOs, both local and international, work with trafficking victims. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) took the lead in 2004 with its nationwide project to rescue, rehabilitate, and reintegrate children who had been trafficked (mainly from the south) to fishing villages in the northeast along the Volta River. The IOM, with GoG in-kind assistance provides counseling and medical care to trafficking victims for two months before assisting them back to their home villages. Upon their return, the IOM provides micro-credit assistance to parents to help prevent re-trafficking. The IOM also provides support for one year with the children's school feeds and school uniforms and supplies. The IOM project also provides micro-credit assistance to fishermen who agree to release the trafficked children, to enable the fishermen to explore alternative sources of income. As of the end of February 2006, 537 children have been rescued through this project. This number excludes 13 children who were rescued in February, 2006 and are currently undergoing rehabilitation at the Madina center prior to reintegration into their villages.

The African Centre for Human Development (ACHD), Save the Children UK, Children in Need, Action Aid, Catholic Action for Street Children, the Gender and Human Rights Documentation Center, Catholic Relief Services, Street Girls Aid, ILO/IPEC and UNICEF all work in the areas of child labor and support for street children. These organizations, as well as the University of Ghana's Center for Social Policy Studies, conduct studies into trafficking as part of their broader agenda, perform some rescue operations for street kids, provide training and education for victims of trafficking and abuse, and in some cases, assist with family reunification. Many of the children helped by ACHD were re-trafficked because of minimal post-rehabilitation follow-up.